



**COUNTY OF MECOSTA**  
**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
400 ELM STREET, BIG RAPIDS, MI 49307  
Phone (231) 796-2505 Fax (231) 592-0121  
www.co.mecosta.mi.us

R05-12-A-004

Kevin Courtney  
District #1

Jerry Williams  
District #2

Richard Wheeler  
District #3

Raymond Steinke  
District #4

Arthur Adleman  
District #5

Eric O'Neil  
District #6

William Routley  
District #7

Paul E. Bullock  
Controller/Administrator

Environmental Management Support, Inc.

November 18, 2011

Attn: Mr. Don West

8601 Georgia Avenue, Suite 500  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

RECEIVED  
NOV 17 2011

Re: FY2012 USEPA Brownfields Hazardous Substances and  
Petroleum Assessment Grant Application.....  
Mecosta County, Michigan

Dear Mr. West:

Mecosta County (the County) is submitting the enclosed application for two USEPA Brownfields Assessment Grants – \$200,000 for Hazardous Substances and \$200,000 for Petroleum. The County needs these grants to support the continued success of its Brownfields Program, which was first funded with a USEPA Hazardous Substances Assessment Grant in FY2007. The County was successful using its previous Assessment Grants to stimulate brownfields redevelopment, however those funds are nearly depleted. Six of the County's brownfield sites (e.g., former Phillips Ford, River Rock, Checkers, Larsen Muffler, Buffalo Market, and Striketown parcels) were purchased and redeveloped by companies who relied on the environmental assessment activities funded by the County's FY2007 Assessment Grants. The County's project outcomes to date include the assessment of nearly 44 acres of brownfields, the creation of 90 jobs in the County, and \$1.1 million in leveraged private redevelopment investment, all resulting from the use of its FY2007 Assessment Grant funds.

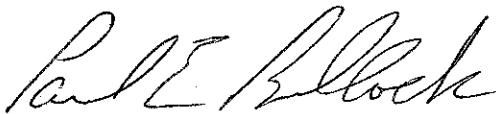
Despite this success, the County is faced with even greater unemployment and poverty since applying for its initial Assessment Grant in 2007. The County's 22% poverty rate is nearly double the national rate of 14.3% (*U.S. Census American Community Survey*) and the County's unemployment rate has increased to 12.1% (*State of Michigan Labor Market Information*). The County needs additional Assessment Grant funds (hazardous substances and petroleum) to help sustain the momentum of its brownfields redevelopment program (a key component of its Community Plan), put its residents back to work, and improve the local standard of living. The USEPA Assessment Grants are an incentive that have and will continue to attract new sustainable businesses to the County. The County also needs additional Assessment Grant funds to evaluate the nature and extent of contamination at its seven Priority Brownfield sites, and to conduct cleanup planning that supports redevelopment activities which will ultimately reduce the disproportionate impact of these brownfields on nearby residents and the County's natural resources. The County also has experience leveraging Assessment Grant

funds (e.g., over \$1 million of private investment leveraged from use of FY2007 grant), and understands how to utilize other financial incentives to support brownfields redevelopment. The County will use its leveraged funding/resources to support programmatic management and community involvement, supplement environmental assessment activities, and, if needed, help cover costs associated with remediation, demolition, and site preparation activities at brownfield sites.

The following applicant information is provided as specified in the Grant Guidelines:

- a. **Applicant Identification:** Mecosta County, 400 Elm Street, Big Rapids, Michigan 49307; Phone: (231) 796-2505.
- b. **Applicant DUNS number:** 04-6779351
- c. **Funding Requested:**
  - i. Grant type: Assessment
  - ii. Amount: \$200,000 (Hazardous Substances) and \$200,000 (Petroleum)
  - iii. Contamination: \$200,000 hazardous substances and \$200,000 petroleum products
  - iv. Community-wide
- d. **Location:** Mecosta County, Michigan
- e. *Not a site-specific proposal*
- f. **Contacts:**
  - i. The Project Director is Mr. William Mrdeza, Executive Director of Mecosta County Development Corporation, who can be contacted at 246 N. State Street, Big Rapids, Michigan 49307; Phone: (231) 592-3403; E-mail: [wmrdeza@co.mecosta.mi.us](mailto:wmrdeza@co.mecosta.mi.us).
  - ii. The Chief Administrator for Mecosta County is Mr. Paul Bullock, who can be contacted at 400 Elm Street, Big Rapids, Michigan 49307; Phone: (231) 796-2505; E-mail: [pbullock@co.mecosta.mi.us](mailto:pbullock@co.mecosta.mi.us).
- g. **Date Submitted:** November 18, 2011
- h. **Project Period:** Three years
- i. **Population:** 42,798 (2010 U.S. Census)
- j. **Special Considerations:** The Special Considerations Checklist is attached.

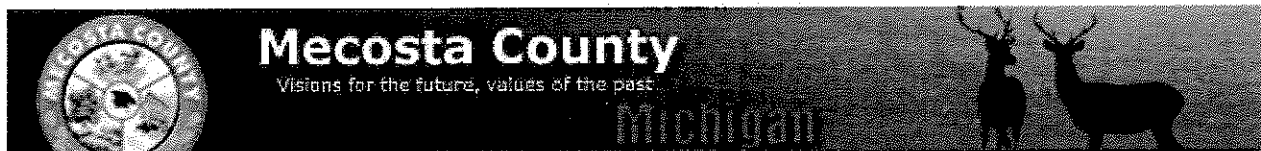
Very truly yours,



Paul E. Bullock, County Administrator  
Mecosta County

Attachments: Special Considerations Checklist

Distribution: Ms. Deborah Orr, EPA Region 5 (1 pc)



## FY2012 USEPA BROWNFIELDS HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES AND PETROLEUM ASSESSMENT GRANT PROPOSAL – MECOSTA COUNTY, MICHIGAN

### NARRATIVE PROPOSAL

#### 1. Community Need

Mecosta County (the County) is located in the west-central region of Michigan and encompasses an area of approximately 555 square miles (355,200 acres). The County was successful in using its FY2007 USEPA Hazardous Substances and Petroleum Assessment Grants to stimulate brownfields redevelopment, however those funds are almost depleted and more work must be done. The County is faced with even greater unemployment and poverty since applying for its initial Assessment Grant in 2007 – nearly 5% of County residents have lost their jobs and 22% live in poverty (*State of Michigan Labor Market Information and 2010 U.S. Census*). The County needs additional Assessment Grant funds to sustain the momentum of its brownfields redevelopment program to stimulate revitalization and put its residents back to work. The County's responses to Threshold Criteria are included in Attachment 1, and a letter of acknowledgment from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) is included in Attachment 2.

**a.i) Health, Welfare, and Environment.** The County needs additional Assessment Grant funding to address the threats brownfields continue to pose to the health and welfare and of its residents and natural resources. Approximately 1,064 brownfields, totaling nearly 12,000 acres (3% of the County's land area) are located within County limits. Soil and groundwater at these sites is known or suspected to be impacted with hazardous substances and petroleum products that threaten the health of nearby sensitive human populations and are likely migrating to the Muskegon River and its tributaries.

A primary health and welfare concern for the County is the concentration of brownfields within its communities and associated negative impacts to residents. The MDEQ identified 744 sites (of the overall 1,064) in the County with known environmental contamination (both hazardous substances and petroleum products). The County has targeted six priority brownfield sites within six of its most susceptible communities for use of grant funds. Table 1 identifies these brownfields and associated communities, as well as known contaminants, sensitive receptors, and health threats to residents.

**Table 1 – Priority Brownfields and Impact to Susceptible Communities**

Community	Brownfields / Known Contaminants <sup>1</sup>	Size (acres)	Sensitive Human and Ecological Receptors	Health Threats <sup>2</sup>
Barryton	Former GT Scrap Tire Facility: <i>Arsenic, benzo(a)pyrene, mercury, naphthalene, phenanthrene, trimethylbenzenes (TMBs), xylenes</i>	12	Schools: <i>Barryton Elementary School</i> Parks: <i>Merrill Lake Park</i> Water Bodies: <i>Chippewa River</i>	Blood, eyes, kidneys, liver, lungs, skin; gastrointestinal, lymphatic, nervous, reproductive, and respiratory systems
Big Rapids	Hanchett Manufacturing: <i>Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), trichloroethylene (TCE)</i>	6	Schools: <i>St. Mary's School</i> Parks: <i>Swede Hill Park</i> Water Bodies: <i>Muskegon River</i>	Eyes, heart, kidneys, liver, skin; nervous and respiratory systems

**Table 2, continued – Priority Brownfields and Impact to Susceptible Communities**

<b>Community</b>	<b>Brownfields / Known Contaminants<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Size (acres)</b>	<b>Sensitive Human and Ecological Receptors</b>	<b>Health Threats<sup>2</sup></b>
<b>Mecosta</b>	<b>Former Standard Service Station:</b> <i>Benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, xylenes (BTEX), TMBs, TCE</i>	<b>1</b>	<b>Schools:</b> <i>Mecosta Elementary School</i> <b>Parks:</b> <i>Canadian Lakes Natural Area</i> <b>Water Bodies:</b> <i>Little Muskegon River</i>	Blood, bone marrow, eyes, heart, kidneys, liver, skin; gastrointestinal, nervous, and respiratory systems
<b>Remus</b>	<b>Former Gingrich Tire Center:</b> <i>BTEX, naphthalene, n-propylbenzene, TMBs</i>	<b>4</b>	<b>Schools:</b> <i>Chippewa Hills Intermediate School</i> <b>Parks:</b> <i>Veteran's Park</i> <b>Water Bodies:</b> <i>Pine River</i>	Blood, bone marrow, eyes, kidneys, liver, skin; gastrointestinal, nervous, and respiratory systems
<b>Rodney</b>	<b>Former Mecosta Landfill:</b> <i>perchloroethylene (PCE), vinyl chloride (VC)</i>	<b>85</b>	<b>Schools:</b> <i>Head Start Preschool</i> <b>Parks:</b> <i>White Pine Trail Park</i> <b>Water Bodies:</b> <i>Ryan Creek</i>	Blood, eyes, kidneys, liver, skin; lymphatic, nervous, and respiratory systems
<b>Stanwood</b>	<b>Former Red's Service Station:</b> <i>BTEX, naphthalene, TMBs</i>	<b>2</b>	<b>Schools:</b> <i>Stanwood Elementary School</i> <b>Parks:</b> <i>White Pine Trail Park</i> <b>Water Bodies:</b> <i>Macks Creek</i>	Blood, bone marrow, eyes, kidneys, liver, skin; gastrointestinal, nervous, and respiratory systems

<sup>1</sup> Known contaminants are those identified by the MDEQ (i.e., online lists for Part 201 Sites and Leaking Underground Storage Tank Sites).

<sup>2</sup> Health threats for known contaminants were identified in the NIOSH Pocket Guide to Chemical Hazards (online version).

The County needs additional Assessment Grant funds to evaluate the nature and extent of contamination at these sites and to conduct cleanup planning that supports redevelopment activities which will ultimately reduce the disproportionate impact of these brownfields on nearby residents. Residents are likely being exposed to the contaminants listed in Table 1 via direct contact, inhalation of particulates and vapors, and ingestion because these sites are all located within close proximity to residential neighborhoods, schools, parks, and publicly accessible water bodies. These priority brownfields pose threats to residents because each site is impacted with contaminants known to cause health problems, such as respiratory and neurological/nerve damage, cancer, kidney damage, and anemia, as well as reproductive system damage, birth defects, miscarriage, and still births.

During a county-wide reconnaissance, the County identified 320 additional brownfields (of the overall 1,064) within the boundaries of these six disproportionately impacted communities. These sites consist of active or abandoned gas stations, automotive repair shops, dry cleaners, machine shops, metal scrap yards, foundries, and manufacturing plants. It is suspected these sites have impacted the subsurface with hazardous substances and petroleum products (e.g., volatile organic compounds, chlorinated solvents, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, and metals). The majority of these sites have buildings that are aging and likely contain asbestos materials and lead-based paints and, due to their unsecured condition, residents (especially children) can access these structures. Once inside, residents may be exposed to asbestos fibers (known to cause cancer, mesothelioma, and asbestosis) and deteriorated lead-based paints and dust (known to cause neurological damage in children). The potential health effects associated with these unreported sites are similar to those identified for the priority brownfields.

The concentration of brownfields in the County's sensitive communities and the health data reported below – indicating a link between race, age, income, and health effects – demonstrate a disproportionate impact from brownfields on minorities, children, elderly and low-income County

residents. Table 2 illustrates the communities of Barryton, Big Rapids, Mecosta, Remus, Rodney, and Stanwood have higher numbers of low-income, sensitive populations (e.g., minorities, children, and the elderly) than the County as a whole. These sensitive populations also reside in substandard housing that is located in close proximity or adjacent to the County's priority brownfields (see Table 1).

**Table 2 – Disproportionately Impacted Communities**

Geographic Area	Minorities	< 5 years	age 65 and above	Below poverty level
Mecosta County	6.3% <sup>1</sup>	5.3% <sup>2</sup>	15% <sup>2</sup>	22.3% <sup>2</sup>
Barryton	6.9% <sup>1</sup>	5.1% <sup>2</sup>	19% <sup>2</sup>	26% <sup>2</sup>
Big Rapids	12% <sup>1</sup>	6.1% <sup>2</sup>	6.4% <sup>2</sup>	44.9% <sup>2</sup>
Mecosta	7.1% <sup>1</sup>	8.7% <sup>2</sup>	27% <sup>2</sup>	30.5% <sup>2</sup>
Remus	5.2% <sup>1</sup>	9.4% <sup>2</sup>	23% <sup>2</sup>	34.5% <sup>2</sup>
Rodney	6.4% <sup>1</sup>	12% <sup>2</sup>	18.2% <sup>2</sup>	21.7% <sup>2</sup>
Stanwood	8.6% <sup>1</sup>	14.2% <sup>2</sup>	11.4% <sup>2</sup>	39.6% <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>U.S. Census 2010; <sup>2</sup>2009 American Community Survey

Based on the trends in asthma, cancer, and infant mortality rates (see Table 3) in the County, it is apparent that minority and sensitive populations are disproportionately impacted by their proximity and exposure to contaminants from the County's brownfields, presenting an environmental justice issue for the County. The prevalence of asthma in adults is higher in the County than in the state of Michigan and the United States. A strong correlation exists between race, socioeconomic status, and asthma. African American persons are over four times more likely to be hospitalized for asthma than Caucasian persons, as are children from impoverished areas versus those in high-income areas (*Michigan Department of Community Health, Disparities in Michigan's Asthma Burden, 2005*).

Cancer death rates (age-adjusted death rate per 100,000 population) are also similarly elevated in the County. Infant mortality rates per 1,000 for the County are also substantially higher than those in Michigan and the United States. It is likely the brownfields within the County's sensitive communities are generating air pollutants that are contributing to the elevated asthma and cancer rates of minority residents, and negatively impacting the health of expecting mothers. Direct contact or ingestion of contaminated soil particulates in these areas may also be contributing to the elevated cancer rates within the County.

**Table 3 – Disproportionate Health Effects**

	Asthma Prevalence	Cancer Death Rate	Infant Mortality Rate
U.S.	8.5% <sup>1</sup>	184.0 <sup>3</sup>	6.6 <sup>4</sup>
Michigan	9.5% <sup>1</sup>	192.6 <sup>3</sup>	7.4 <sup>4</sup>
Mecosta County	10.3% <sup>2</sup>	207.5 <sup>3</sup>	11.9 <sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>American Lung Association, *Trends in Asthma Morbidity and Mortality, 2008*; <sup>2</sup>Health Indicators and Risk Estimates by Community Health Assessment Geographic Area and Local Health Departments, 1999-2003; <sup>3</sup>National Cancer Institute, *State Cancer Profile, 2000-2005*; <sup>4</sup>Michigan Department of Community Health, 2008

The Michigan Department of Community Health has indicated that elevated blood-lead levels in children are rising in the County. Children in the communities cited in Table 2 are more likely to be exposed to lead particulates from older buildings on brownfields and aging residential structures. Some of the highest numbers of older housing units (constructed before 1978) are located in the County's disproportionately impacted communities, and are suspected of containing lead-based paint hazards.

A second health and welfare concern for the County is the adverse impact of priority brownfields on its natural resources (e.g., surface water, parks, groundwater). Each of the County's priority

brownfields is situated on the banks of a stream and near a natural area or park. For example, the Hanchett Manufacturing priority brownfield in Big Rapids is situated along the banks of the Muskegon River, which flows through nearby Swede Hill Park, a popular after-school hangout for children at St. Mary's School (adjacent to Hanchett site). The extent of contamination (e.g., PCBs, TCE) from the Hanchett site entering the river and parkland via stormwater runoff and groundwater discharge remains largely uncharacterized. As a result, the health of the river and parkland (and ultimately school children and park visitors) is threatened by the Hanchett site.

Another priority brownfield threatening the County's natural resources is the former Standard Service Station site in Mecosta, where the largest concentration of the County's elderly population resides. This site is located adjacent to the Little Muskegon River and near Mecosta Elementary School. The County is currently unable to redevelop this site or adjacent properties due to concerns regarding the unknown extent (on-site and off-site) of volatile organic compounds in groundwater released at this site. Finally, a priority brownfield negatively impacting the County's groundwater supply is the former Mecosta Landfill in Rodney. Residents in this area depend on groundwater as their drinking water source. The MDEQ has documented releases of PCE and vinyl chloride at this site. The potential human health threats to these residents remain unknown.

The priority brownfields located in the County's sensitive communities present a threat to human health through direct contact and ingestion of contaminants (e.g., drinking groundwater) and/or exposure to airborne particulates and volatile compounds. The elevated asthma, cancer, and mortality rates in the County illustrate that minorities, children, elderly and low-income residents are being impacted by these contaminants. The migration of contaminants from these brownfields via stormwater and/or groundwater also poses a threat to the County's water bodies and natural areas. The additional Assessment Grants will provide the County with the necessary funding to delineate the extent of contamination at its priority brownfields, determine ways to control contaminant migration, and begin improving the health and welfare of its residents and natural environment.

**b.i) Financial Need.** The economic impact of brownfields on the County began with the demise of its industrial base. Faced with increasing overseas competition and cheaper out-of-state labor, the County's manufacturers have steadily downsized or closed their plants over the past decade. The endless downward spiral of the manufacturing industry has resulted not only in catastrophic job losses in the County but also the creation of several brownfields in and around residential areas. Smaller support operations have also failed, creating small brownfields scattered throughout the County's commercial districts. The impact of the 2007 global financial crisis has resulted in nearly 3,000 residents losing their jobs (*State of Michigan Labor Market Information*). Eight local manufacturers were forced to downsize, resulting in the loss of nearly 600 factory jobs and an estimated 2,400 related supporting jobs (e.g., parts suppliers, cleaning services, restaurants within the County).

**Table 4 – Demographic Comparison**

	<b>Mecosta County</b>	<b>Michigan</b>	<b>U.S.</b>
Population	42,798 <sup>1</sup>	9,883,640 <sup>1</sup>	308,745,538 <sup>1</sup>
Unemployment	12.1% <sup>4</sup>	11.2% <sup>4</sup>	9% <sup>5</sup>
Poverty Rate	22.3% <sup>3</sup>	16.1% <sup>2</sup>	14.3% <sup>2</sup>
Percent Minority	6.3% <sup>1</sup>	21.1% <sup>1</sup>	27.6% <sup>1</sup>
Per Capita Income	\$18,844 <sup>3</sup>	\$25,172 <sup>2</sup>	\$27,041 <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census 2010; <sup>2</sup> 2010 U.S. Census American Community Survey; <sup>3</sup> 2009 U.S. Census American Community Survey; <sup>4</sup> Michigan Department of Technology, Management, and Budget – Labor Market Information, September 2011; <sup>5</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics, October 2011

The major economic impact of brownfields on the County is the lack of employment opportunities for residents struggling to make ends meet. As shown in Table 4, 22.3% of residents live below the poverty level, which is nearly double the national rate (14.3%). The highest concentrations of impoverished residents live in the County's most sensitive communities (see Tables 1 and 2). Due to the global financial crisis, the unemployment rate in the County has increased to 12.1%,

compared with 9% in the United States. These statistics are generally assumed to be understated 3% to 5% by not accounting for workers who have given up looking for a job. The per capita income for County residents (\$18,844) is also substantially lower than the per capita incomes for Michigan (\$25,172) and the United States (\$27,041). The presence of brownfields throughout the County's disproportionately impacted communities has exacerbated local financial problems by decreasing property values and inhibiting the growth of the equity assets of residents, often resulting in "underwater" mortgages (i.e., more is owed on the property than it is worth). As these residents struggle to earn enough money to simply pay their bills while their main asset (their home) declines in value, they depend more and more on the services that the County and state government provide (i.e., public assistance, unemployment benefits, medical benefits, etc.), depleting the County's resources, which could be spent on brownfields redevelopment.

Another economic impact of brownfields is the decrease in available revenue to the County. Since 2007, the County's revenues have decreased by over \$2 million (*2011 Mecosta County Budget Report*). As the economic problems trickle upward from County residents and businesses, County government is collecting less money and facing ever-tightening budgets under which they must operate. Unemployment numbers are increasing; therefore, residents and businesses have less money to invest in the community, triggering a cycle of additional layoffs and decreased investment in the community. As the number of brownfields increases, local property values are suppressed and the County's property tax revenues decrease. Since 2006, the amount of tax-reverted property in the County has increased by 163%, furthering reducing the amount of revenue available to the County (*Michigan Department of Treasury*). Similarly, as unemployment increases and/or higher paying manufacturing jobs are replaced by lower paying service jobs, local income tax revenues also decrease. Revenue shortfalls at the state level have produced budgetary deficits, resulting in cuts to revenue sharing programs for the County. For example, funds attributable to Act 51 (governing state appropriations for state-generated transportation revenue) have decreased dramatically due to a decrease in revenue generated by fuel taxes. In the last decade, the State of Michigan has decreased the County's share of revenue by nearly \$1,000,000 (*Michigan Department of Treasury*). As local taxes and state revenue sharing decrease, County operating expenses are steadily increasing. These conditions have resulted in a decrease in the County's general fund balance which means the County has less money to spend on "non-essential" costs. As a result, brownfields assessment and redevelopment projects have not been adequately funded. The County needs additional Assessment Grant funds to cover the costs associated with initial environmental assessment activities and cleanup planning to support the purchase and safe redevelopment of its brownfields.

The County was awarded two Assessment Grants (hazardous substances and petroleum) in FY2007; however, those funds are nearly depleted. The FY2012 Assessment Grant funding the County is requesting (\$400,000) will not completely fund the assessment and cleanup planning costs associated with the County's six priority brownfields, which are estimated at \$955,000; this estimate is based on the scopes of work and associated fees developed by the County's qualified environmental consultant for the priority brownfields. To bridge this funding gap, the County is prepared to leverage additional funds (see Section 2b.iii) to support these activities; however, given Michigan's budget shortfalls and the County's decreased revenues, it is unlikely these leveraged funds will be solely sufficient to complete the work needed to fully evaluate the County's priority brownfields, let alone other brownfields that may become priorities in the future (i.e., those that support job creation).

The County effectively utilized its previous Assessment Grants; however, to outpace continued job losses, increased poverty, and dwindling revenue sources, the County needs additional Assessment Grants to sustain the momentum of its brownfields redevelopment program. By providing money not available from local or state budgets, the additional Assessment Grants will allow the County to assess contamination at its priority brownfield sites, plan remediation activities, and proceed with plans to restore the financial health of the community.

## **2. Project Description and Feasibility of Success**

**a.i) Project Description.** The basis for the County's Assessment Grant Project is the realization that redevelopment of its priority brownfields will lead to improved community well-being, wise land use decisions, and increased local tax revenues. In the last decade, the County's economy has been decimated by the decline of manufacturing jobs, and the closing of local businesses that supported these industries. The combination of these factors has resulted in numerous brownfields in close proximity to sensitive populations, vacant and underutilized commercial/industrial properties, and a sharp increase in unemployment.

The County's Community Plan, *Mecosta County Master Plan*, provides a framework for the Assessment Grant Project (the Project). The overall goals of the County's plan include, 1) Sustainable Land Use, 2) Increased Economic Development, 3) High Quality Community Facilities, 4) Suitable and Affordable Housing, 5) Natural Resource Protection, and 6) Efficient Transportation System. These goals are consistent with the Livability Principles adopted by the partnership between the USEPA, the United States Department of Transportation, and the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, which include: provide more transportation choices; promote equitable, affordable housing; enhance economic competitiveness; support existing communities; coordinate and leverage federal policies and investment; and value communities and neighborhoods. The County's use of Assessment Grant funds to assess its priority brownfields will support the goals of its Community Plan as outlined in Table 5.

**Table 5 – Community Plan Goals and Supporting Assessment Grant Activities**

<b>Community Goal</b>	<b>Supporting Assessment Grant Activities</b>
Sustainable Land Use	The County's priority brownfields are located in areas of existing development with operational infrastructure; the use of Assessment Grant funds to foster redevelopment of these sites will support the County's goal of reducing impacts to greenspace and promoting concentrated development in downtown areas.
Increased Economic Development	The County will conduct community outreach activities that stimulate economic development by promoting reuse/redevelopment of priority brownfields; sustainable job-creating businesses will be targeted for outreach efforts, and Assessment Grant funds will be included in redevelopment incentives packages.
High Quality Community Facilities	The County will use Assessment Grant funds to conduct assessments at brownfield properties targeted for community-based uses (e.g. social services, community centers, shelters); leverage additional resources from local and state agencies and citizen advocacy groups to support construction of these facilities.
Suitable and Affordable Housing	Assessment Grant funds will be used to conduct assessments of brownfields in the County's sensitive communities to prepare properties for affordable residential developments in targeted neighborhoods where disproportionately impacted citizens are in need of better housing choices.
Natural Resource Protection	The County will use Assessment Grant funds to characterize land along the Muskegon River and its tributaries to support acquisition and creation of greenspace for parks and trails, which will provide recreational amenities for County residents; these assessments will also provide data to evaluate potential contamination resulting from nearby priority brownfields and support cleanup planning of adjacent natural features.
Efficient Transportation System	Some priority brownfields are located in areas designated for mass transit (e.g. bus) and airport expansion projects; the County's use of assessment grant funds will support environmental investigations and planning related to the acquisition and redevelopment of brownfield parcels targeted for these transit-oriented developments.

The Executive Director of the Mecosta County Development Corporation (MCDC), who managed the County's FY2007 USEPA Assessment Grants, will continue to serve as the Project Director. The Project Director and a qualified environmental consultant will lead a successful, community-



oriented Assessment Grant project to support revitalization of the County's priority brownfields. The Project Director has extensive experience managing redevelopment projects in the County, and will use this knowledge to achieve the goals of the Community Plan. The Project Director will be responsible for the day-to-day grant operations including the following: coordinating assessment activities with involved parties; conducting community outreach; and programmatic requirements. The County is already enrolled in the Automated Standard Application and Payments (ASAP) system, and will continue to manage and track all Project financial transactions, and generate required financial reports. The primary activities of the Project will include conducting environmental site assessments (ESAs) of priority brownfields; evaluating human health risks; identifying site preparation challenges associated with brownfields redevelopment; and supporting design and implementation of environmental response actions to protect residents and the environment.

Following the Assessment Grant award announcement, the County will host a Project kick-off meeting to inform, solicit, and process input from the general public regarding the Project objectives. The County will then prepare a draft Assessment Grant Work Plan and solicit public comments on the draft plan. After the Work Plan is approved by the USEPA, the County will begin the process of retaining a qualified environmental consultant in compliance with applicable federal procurement regulations. The qualified environmental consultant will be retained by the County to assist with grant management operations, perform the technical assessment work, and assist with required reporting.

The County intends to use the majority of its Assessment Grant funds for its priority brownfields; a portion of the grant funds will also be reserved in a "war chest" to be used for other brownfield sites where developer or business interest occurs during the Project. Prior to conducting assessment activities, the County will submit a site eligibility determination to the USEPA and/or the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ). For each site selected for environmental assessment, the County will complete and provide to the USEPA Region 5 a "*Site and Property Owner Eligibility Determination Request for Brownfield Assessment Grant Funds*." The County will document the following property information in the request: basic site information, a status and history of contamination at the site, and site and property owner eligibility. Once a site is deemed eligible, the community will be notified, a Property Profile Form for the site will be entered into the Assessment, Cleanup, and Redevelopment Exchange System (ACRES), and the site initially will be evaluated through performance of Phase I and Phase II Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs).

The Phase I ESA will be conducted according to the requirements of All Appropriate Inquiry (ASTM Standard E1527-05) for investigating current, historical, and regulatory issues associated with the site and nearby properties to identify recognized environmental conditions. The Phase II ESAs will be designed to investigate the areas of potential contamination identified in the Phase I ESAs. The typical assessment goals will be to evaluate the environmental liability, safe use, potential off-site health effects, and redevelopment issues associated with on-site contamination. A Sampling and Analysis Plan (SAP) and Health and Safety Plan (HASP) will be submitted to the USEPA for review. Upon approval of the SAP and HASP, the environmental consultant will proceed with the Phase II ESA.

Upon receipt of the environmental analysis data, the environmental consultant will work with the County, individual community, potential developer, and partners to devise liability management, cleanup, and site use strategies that support redevelopment efforts and improve the health of residents and the environment. After completion of initial assessment activities, additional investigations may be needed to further define the nature and extent of contamination and design environmental response actions for cleanup and safe future use of the site.

Based on the results of the environmental assessments and scale of the proposed redevelopment, a brownfield site may be included in a Michigan brownfield tax increment financing (TIF) project. This will allow for funding of additional assessments, remediation activities, demolition, hazardous materials abatement, etc. The County will also utilize local leveraged resources (see

Section 2.b.iii) to support redevelopment activities. If redevelopment schedules permit, the County may seek additional USEPA grants. Throughout this process, the County and the environmental consultant will provide in-kind services to support the management of both the grant funds and the operation of the Project. By completing this Project, the County will increase the effectiveness and success of its brownfields program and provide incentives for businesses and residents to invest in the community and achieve the goals of its Community Plan.

**b. Budget for Funding, Tracking and Measuring Progress, and Leveraging Other Resources**

**i) Budget.** The Project tasks and estimated costs associated with each Assessment Grant are shown in Table 6. A narrative summary of each Project task and the basis for costs, as well as the projected outputs, is also included in this section.

**Table 6 – Budget for Hazardous Substances and Petroleum Assessment Grants**

Budget Categories	Project Tasks		
	Task 1 Site Assessments	Task 2 Cleanup Planning	Total Grant Budget
<b>Hazardous Substances</b>			
Contractual	\$187,000	\$13,000	\$200,000
<b>Petroleum</b>			
Contractual	\$187,000	\$13,000	\$200,000
<b>TOTAL GRANT BUDGET</b>	<b>\$374,000</b>	<b>\$26,000</b>	<b>\$400,000</b>

*Task 1 – Site Assessments:* The County's estimate for site assessment costs is approximately \$374,000. Prioritized brownfields initially will be evaluated through performance of Phase I and Phase II Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs). The costs for completing Phase I and Phase II ESAs will vary depending on the complexity of the sites. Phase I ESAs generally will range from \$5,000 to \$6,000 and initial Phase II ESAs will range from \$30,000 to \$40,000. The site assessment budget is based on conducting initial screening assessments at the County's six (6) priority brownfields and up to four (4) additional brownfields. The estimated outputs include ten (10) Phase I ESAs at an average cost of \$5,610 each and ten (10) Phase II ESAs at an average cost of \$31,790.

*Task 2 – Cleanup Planning:* The County's estimate for cleanup planning costs is approximately \$26,000. The County will conduct cleanup and redevelopment planning as needed for priority brownfields where such activities will facilitate their redevelopment. The County's cleanup and redevelopment activities may also include preparing a Remedial Action Plan (RAP), assessment of brownfield cleanup and redevelopment alternatives (ABCA), evaluation of institutional and engineering controls, and preparation of Brownfield Plans and Work Plans to support acquisition of tax increment financing (TIF) under the Michigan Brownfield Redevelopment Act (Act 381 of 1996, as amended).

The County will provide in-kind staff resources to facilitate programmatic management and community outreach activities associated with the Assessment Grants. These tasks will include: documenting brownfields project information; coordinating operational and public meetings; preparation of quarterly reports; grant budget tracking; and communications with the USEPA project officer.

**ii) Tracking and Measuring Progress.** The County's plan for tracking and measuring progress consists of the following three components: 1) evaluating Project achievements against those incorporated into the grant application and Work Plan, 2) determining if the Project has resulted in redevelopment of priority sites and improved functioning of the local brownfield redevelopment process (i.e., successful management, acquisition, and leveraging of brownfield financial incentives), and 3) documenting the Project outcomes and outputs. The County currently documents its brownfield redevelopment achievements on a spreadsheet which is distributed to local economic development board members and public stakeholders; this information is also

disseminated during community outreach meetings, and regularly uploaded to the County website for public viewing.

The County diligently tracked Project progress during implementation of its FY2007 Assessment Grants. The following outcomes and outputs have been documented during the previous Project performance period:

**Outcomes (12/07 – 9/11)**

- 44.12 acres of brownfields assessed;
- 90 jobs created; and
- \$1,111,500 in leveraged funding.

**Outputs (12/07 – 9/11)**

- Thirty (30) community outreach meetings;
- Twenty (20) Phase I ESAs, nine (9) Phase II ESAs; and five (5) VCP reports.

The County previously contributed to the success of the USEPA Brownfields Program as evidenced from the outcomes and outputs listed above. The County will continue to help the USEPA achieve its objectives by diligently tracking the outcomes and outputs resulting from its use of the new Assessment Grant funds.

**iii) Leveraging.** The County has experience leveraging Assessment Grant funds (e.g., over \$1 million of private investment leveraged from use of FY2007 grant), and understands how to utilize other financial incentives to support brownfields redevelopment. The County will use the leveraged funding/resources described below to support programmatic management and community involvement, supplement environmental assessment activities, and, if needed, help cover costs associated with remediation, demolition, and site preparation activities. Documentation of these sources is included in Attachment 3.

- *In-Kind Local Government Services.* The County will provide up to 300 hours of staff time (includes Grant Project manager) to support programmatic and community outreach functions associated with the Assessment Grant Project. The value of these in-kind services is approximately \$9,900 (300 hours at an average hourly rate of \$33).
- *In-Kind University Student Services.* Ferris State University (FSU) will support the County's Assessment Grant Project by using students from its Facility Management Program to assist in the brownfield redevelopment design and planning process. FSU has committed up to 320 labor hours of student time (approximately 20 students at 16 hours each) to contribute to community planning efforts.
- *In-Kind Earthmoving Equipment.* Lambrix Serve All, a local licensed contractor, will support the County by providing earthmoving equipment (e.g., backhoe, bulldozer) and operators to clear sites and perform test pits to supplement environmental assessment activities at brownfield sites. Lambrix Serve All has committed up to 50 hours of equipment usage. The value of these in-kind services is approximately \$4,000.

The above-listed entities and individuals are locally based, and consider themselves to be stakeholders in the success of the County's brownfield redevelopment program. As such, their pledge is genuine and they will likely follow through on their leveraging commitment. The County will also request its environmental consultant to contribute the following in-kind services: attendance at project administrative/coordination meetings, and preparation of monthly/quarterly grant status reports, Health and Safety Plans (HASPs), Quality Assurance Project Plans (QAPPs) and Sample Analysis Plans (SAPs).

As specific project details emerge (e.g., construction plans, costs, etc.) for redevelopment of a brownfield, the County can utilize additional local financial incentives. Mecosta County has a Brownfield Redevelopment Authority (BRA) established under the Michigan Brownfield Redevelopment Act (Act 381). Under Act 381, a BRA can capture incremental taxes generated by a brownfield redevelopment to reimburse the costs for environmental response actions that are not eligible for Assessment Grant funding, such as demolition and remediation. As part of an incentive package, the County may also provide applicable real and personal property local tax abatements for redevelopments. In addition to community leveraging options, the County can request additional resources from the USEPA to fill redevelopment funding gaps.

**c. Programmatic Capability and Past Performance**

**i) Programmatic Capability.** The County will maintain its existing Assessment Grant Project Team during the entire grant period. Mr. William Mrdeza, Executive Director of the Mecosta County Development Corporation (MCDC), managed the County's FY2007 Assessment Grants, and he will remain in place throughout the new grant period. Mr. Mrdeza has over 20 years of municipal management and economic development experience, and has assisted dozens of companies with securing brownfield and other redevelopment incentives. Mr. Mrdeza is also responsible for providing staff support to the County's Brownfield Redevelopment Authority and Economic Development Board. The County's plan for management continuity in the event of loss of Mr. Mrdeza relies on management depth and availability of the following personnel to maintain uninterrupted operations and ensure a smooth succession: 1) a trained and capable supervisor (County Administrator, Paul Bullock), 2) experienced environmental consultant, and 3) experienced backup Project Director on staff with the County (Finance Director, Myndi Saxton). The Project Director will be supported by a highly competent environmental consultant experienced in all aspects of USEPA Assessment Grant management. The County will procure the consultant in accordance with applicable requirements of 40 CFR Parts 30 or 31. The consultant will have managed Assessment Grant projects and be familiar with all programmatic requirements to be selected to support the County's grant program. These members of the Project Team will have the primary responsibility for continued operations, selection and training of a successor Project Manager, and training of any new team members. The Project Team also will have access to additional staff expertise and USEPA Grant experience within other departments of the County.

**ii) Adverse Audits.** An audit of the County's management of its FY2007 USEPA Assessment Grant was conducted in 2009. The audit findings indicated some quarterly reports were not filed by their due dates and certain eligible expenses were inadvertently double-reported. This was due to miscommunication among accounting staff. The County's drawdown amounts did not exceed the approved grant budgets. Since this incident, the County has implemented a quality control procedure to review reports and budget expenditures prior to submitting to the USEPA. Reports have since been submitted by their due dates and budget amounts are accurately recorded.

**iii) Past Performance.** The County was awarded two USEPA Assessment Grants (\$200,000 Hazardous Substances and \$200,000 Petroleum) in 2007. The remaining balance of the Hazardous Substances grant is approximately \$24,000, which is allocated for assessment of the former Phillips Ford brownfield site; the remaining budget (\$24,000) will be expended by December 2011, when the assessment activities are anticipated to be completed. The remaining balance of the Petroleum grant is approximately \$43,000, which is allocated for assessment of the former Sinclair Oil brownfield site; the remaining budget (\$43,000) will be expended by January 2012, when the assessment activities are anticipated to be completed.

Following the FY2007 grant award announcement, the County developed a Work Plan and successfully negotiated a Cooperative Agreement (CA) with the USEPA. The County submitted and received approval for its initial project Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) as well as annual QAPP updates. The County has complied with the terms and conditions of its CA; prepared and submitted quarterly reports and annual financial status reports; and has successfully submitted site information and assessment data to the USEPA via the Assessment, Cleanup and Redevelopment Exchange System (ACRES) database. In the midst of a faltering Michigan economy, the County has succeeded in providing incentives for redeveloping several brownfield sites that might otherwise have been left vacant or underutilized. The County has created a successful, functioning brownfields program and made measurable progress toward achieving the goals of its FY2007 Assessment Grant project; however more work remains. In addition to the County's six priority brownfields, over 1,000 brownfields remain to be assessed and redeveloped into uses consistent with the County's Community Plan.

The specific achievements of the County's FY2007 Assessment Grants include the assessment of over 44 acres of brownfields, the creation of 90 jobs in the County (helping to reestablish the

3,000 lost jobs), and approximately \$1.1 million in leveraged private redevelopment investment, all resulting from the use of \$333,000 in Assessment Grant funds. The County reported these accomplishments to the USEPA using the ACRES database. See Section 2.b.ii. for specific outcomes and outputs associated with this grant to date.

### **3. Community Engagement and Partnerships**

**a. Plan for Community Involvement.** The County believes it is important to provide its citizens and community organizations ample opportunity to become informed and provide input into all phases of the Project. Following the USEPA award notice for the new Assessment Grants, the County will announce the award to the community through a press release to its local newspaper, *The Pioneer*, a notice on the County's website, advertisements on the local public radio stations (WBRN 1460 AM, WBRN 100.9 FM) and local access cable television. The County will notify its community partners (see Section 3.c.) to assist with the community notification process.

The primary post-award community input program will be focused on preparation of the grant Work Plan and final budget. After a draft Work Plan and budget are prepared, it will be made available to the public, and comments on the draft will be solicited. The document will be posted on the County's website, and hard copies will be made available at the County offices to ensure access for those without adequate information technology availability, knowledge, or experience. The document availability and solicitation of comments will be announced to the public via the County's website, newspaper notice, local radio stations, and specific notification of community partners. Public comments on the proposed Project and allocation of grant funds will be accepted verbally, in writing, and publicly discussed during a County Commission meeting. The County hopes to learn if residents have suggestions to modify the Project approach to better serve the community. The draft Work Plan will be modified in response to relevant comments and all comments/responses will be summarized in the final Work Plan.

Following approval of the Work Plan, the County will seek public input prior to conducting assessments at priority sites and when additional information regarding the Project is requested by citizens. County representatives will attend community organization meetings to discuss the Project and/or specific site assessments. Meetings regarding activities at priority sites will be held before site activities are initiated to familiarize stakeholders with what to expect during and after the assessment process. This process will repeat for each site to be assessed.

Following completion of an assessment, the primary information flow will be outward to the community, notifying local stakeholders about assessment activities that have occurred, providing results of the assessments, and explaining health and environmental impacts of findings. At the close of the Project, the County will hold a final public meeting to notify the community of the successes and challenges faced during the Project and request comments regarding interest in pursuing additional grants.

**b. Agency Partnerships.** The County will continue its existing partnership with the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) to help ensure appropriate assessment and cleanup of its priority brownfield sites. These programs will be conducted in compliance with the rules and guidance promulgated by the MDEQ pursuant to Michigan's Voluntary Cleanup Program (VCP). The County will coordinate with MDEQ for VCP technical support, resolution of regulatory or procedural issues, and interpretation of rules and guidance documents. When contamination is discovered on brownfields, the MDEQ cleanup criteria will be used to identify and address on-site health and environmental threats posed by the contamination. When tax increment financing is used to reimburse costs of environmental activities associated with brownfields, the MDEQ must review and approve work plans for the environmental response actions. The MDEQ will also review and approve Remedial Action Plans (RAPs) for brownfields where response actions are completed.

The District Health Department #10 (DHD #10) will continue to be involved in protecting public health and the environment during the County's assessment, cleanup, and redevelopment of its priority brownfield sites. If contamination discovered through assessment of brownfields has the

potential to negatively impact the health of local populations, the County will notify the MDEQ and DHD #10; these entities will team with the County as Project partners. The expertise and experience of DHD #10 will be called upon to help identify/verify off-site health threats posed by identified contamination; identify related toxicological issues and perform risk evaluations with assistance from the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR); design and conduct notification/education programs; and coordinate health testing (e.g., blood-lead tests) if migration of contamination from a brownfield site is confirmed.

The National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) awarded a Worker Education and Training Program (WETP) grant to the Midwest Consortium for Hazardous Waste Workers Training (the Consortium) in 2010. Michigan is among the nine states representing the Consortium. The WETP grant funds a Hazardous Waste Worker Training Program (HWWTP) facilitated by Michigan State University (MSU). The HWWTP provides hands-on training in jobs related to hazardous materials assessment and remediation, and emergency response. The County has an existing relationship with MSU and intends to utilize the HWWTP during implementation of its new Assessment Grants. During community outreach meetings, the County will distribute information about the HWWTP (e.g. fact sheets, training applications, etc.) to its residents. A link to the HWWTP website will be available on the County's website. The County will solicit input from MSU to ensure qualified graduates of the HWWTP have an opportunity to participate in site assessment and/or remediation activities at priority brownfield sites.

**c. Community-Based Organizations.** The following community-based organizations will be directly involved in the Assessment Grant Project: The Lions Club of Big Rapids, Mecosta County Area Chamber of Commerce, Michigan Works! West Central, and the Muskegon River Watershed Assembly. The following sections provide a description of each organization and its respective role in the Project. Letters of support from these organizations are included in Attachment 4.

*The Lions Club of Big Rapids.* The Lions Club of Big Rapids (Lions Club) supports local residents by raising money to pay for many community services, such as health clinics, local recreational facilities, assistance to blind and hearing impaired residents, and support for students. The role of the Lions Club in the new Assessment Grant Project will consist of coordinating with Mecosta County during community outreach activities. They will host public meetings and disseminate information on upcoming brownfield projects, and also solicit and process feedback from county residents regarding their knowledge of local brownfield sites of concern.

*The Mecosta County Area Chamber of Commerce.* The Mecosta County Area Chamber of Commerce (MCCOC) is a community resource that assists and strengthens local businesses by providing advertising and networking opportunities, as well as hosting educational seminars. The MCCOC's role in the Assessment Grant Project will consist of coordinating with local governmental units, promoting inter-governmental collaboration, hosting community economic development forums, advertising the grant program, and helping entrepreneurs in accessing and utilizing the grant funds.

*Michigan Works! West Central.* The mission of Michigan Works! West Central (Michigan Works!) is to produce a local, talented workforce with the required skills to attract, retain and expand businesses and enhance our regional economy. Michigan Works! demonstrated their commitment to brownfield redevelopment by moving their headquarters into a former brownfield site that was assessed with Mecosta County's FY2007 USEPA Assessment Grant funds. The role of Michigan Works! in the new Assessment Grant Project will consist of coordinating with Mecosta County to determine if employment opportunities are available during brownfield redevelopment projects. They will review their databases and coordinate with MSU (see Section 3.b.) to ascertain if qualified local workers are available to assist with jobs related to assessment, remediation, or construction activities at brownfield sites assessed during the Grant Project, and place these candidates into appropriate positions.

*The Muskegon River Watershed Assembly.* The mission of the Muskegon River Watershed Assembly (MRWA) is to preserve, protect, restore, and promote sustainable use of the Muskegon River, the land it drains, and the life it supports, through educational, scientific and conservation

initiatives. The MRWS's role in the Assessment Grant Project will be to assist Mecosta County with its community goal of protecting and preserving its water resources. The MRWS will attend project meetings as needed, and provide input on potential impacts to the Muskegon River watershed resulting from existing brownfields. During the environmental assessment, cleanup, and redevelopment process, they will provide the Project team with stream quality data and other information related to water quality, and provide guidance to minimize impacts to streams during redevelopment activities (e.g. earthwork during construction).

#### **4. Project Benefits**

The goals of the County's Community Plan include 1) Sustainable Land Use, 2) Increased Economic Development, 3) High Quality Community Facilities, 4) Suitable and Affordable Housing, 5) Natural Resource Protection, and 6) Efficient Transportation System. The use of the new Assessment Grants will allow the County to achieve its vision by conducting assessments that support redevelopments and provide cleanup planning, which ultimately improve the health and welfare of disproportionately impacted residents, promote economic growth and revitalize neighborhoods, protect parks and greenspace, restore water bodies, support reuse of existing infrastructure, and promote sustainable development.

**a. Welfare and/or Public Health.** The new Assessment Grants will support characterizing the threats the County's priority brownfields pose to human health and the environment, which coincides with the Community Plan goals of improving community living conditions (e.g. more affordable housing) and protecting natural resources. As described in Table 7, redevelopment of the County's priority brownfields will improve the health and welfare of residents and the environment by removing and/or mitigating sources of contamination and limiting uncontrolled migration of contamination into area water resources.

**Table 7 – Health and Welfare Benefits of Redeveloping Priority Brownfields**

<b>Priority Sites</b>	<b>Health and Welfare Benefits to Community</b>
Former GT Scrap Tire Facility	Environmental assessments will evaluate the extent of arsenic, mercury, and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and support cleanup planning that addresses direct contact and inhalation (particulate and vapor) concerns for residents and nearby Barryton Elementary students. Remediation will reduce contaminant migration to the Chippewa River. Engineering controls will be installed to support redevelopment of the site into a park.
Hanchett Manufacturing	Environmental assessments will evaluate the extent of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and VOCs and identify other contaminants that threaten users of Swede Hill Park (residents and St. Mary's students) and the adjacent Muskegon River. The site will be redeveloped into mixed-use residential (affordable housing) and commercial, so cleanup will focus on mitigating direct contact and vapor intrusion concerns for future residents and occupants of the site. Remediation activities will also be designed to reduce contaminant migration to the river and park.
Former Standard Service Station	Environmental assessments will evaluate the extent of benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, and xylenes (BTEX) and other VOCs in groundwater and determine impacts to elderly residents and Mecosta Elementary students, as well as identify threats to the Little Muskegon River. Cleanup will be conducted and vapor extraction or barrier systems will be installed in area buildings to protect residents from inhalation exposures and reduce contaminated stormwater runoff to the river. The site is targeted for redevelopment as a park.
Former Gingrich Tire Center	Environmental assessments will evaluate the extent of BTEX and other VOCs in soil and groundwater, which threatens the health of residents and nearby Chippewa Hills students via direct contact and inhalation of vapors. Remediation will be designed to remove source areas and install engineering controls to support redevelopment of the site into parkland (incorporated into existing Veteran's Park). Cleanup and redevelopment activities will mitigate human health concerns and reduce impacts to nearby Pine River.



**Table 7, continued – Health and Welfare Benefits of Redeveloping Priority Brownfields**

Priority Sites	Health and Welfare Benefits to Community
Former Mecosta Landfill	Environmental assessments will evaluate the extent of chlorinated solvents in groundwater, which threatens the drinking water supply of nearby residents and Head Start preschool children. Remediation activities will consist of removal of source areas and installation of groundwater treatment systems, which will reduce the health threats to residents and children and protect nearby water bodies. Successful cleanup activities may lead to redevelopment and incorporation of the site into the nearby White Pine Trail Park.
Former Red's Service Station	Environmental assessments will be conducted to evaluate the extent of BTEX and other VOCs in soil and groundwater, which will support cleanup planning that addresses direct contact and vapor inhalation concerns for residents and nearby Stanwood Elementary students. Remediation of contaminants will also reduce impacts to nearby Macks Creek. Post-remediation engineering controls will be installed to support redevelopment of the site into a community center.

Redevelopment of these priority brownfields utilizes equitable development principles in economically disadvantaged communities in a way that directly benefits the residents. Because this work will be completed on existing sites, residents will reap the benefits without being displaced from their homes or neighborhoods. Assessment Grant operating procedures will ensure that the community is protected from contaminants during assessment work. A Health and Safety Plan (HASP) will be completed for each site where intrusive sampling will occur and access to the site will be controlled during assessment operations. As specified in the HASP, when subsurface samples are collected or hazardous building materials are disturbed, the release of particulates and vapors will be monitored and controlled. Decontamination water and purge water generated during groundwater sampling activities will be containerized on-site and appropriately disposed. The assessment data generated will be used to help the County and/or a developer determine how to protect the community during redevelopment activities.

**b. Economic Benefits and/or Greenspace.** The new Assessment Grants will support the County's goals for increased economic development and improvements to public facilities (e.g. parks), which are objectives of the County's Community Plan.

**i) Economic Benefits.** The County will use the Assessment Grant funds to conduct community outreach activities that stimulate economic development by promoting reuse and redevelopment of its priority brownfields. The County will solicit sustainable job-creating businesses and include Assessment Grant funds in redevelopment incentives packages. The County believes that the increased retail, recreational, and educational options spurred by brownfields redevelopment will improve living conditions and attract additional development to its disproportionately impacted communities. These redevelopment projects will improve the tax base and diversify the County's work force, rendering it less vulnerable to swings in the economy and disproportionate impact from traditional manufacturing (e.g., automobile production). The redevelopment of the County's priority brownfields will have the following direct economic benefits:

- **Former GT Scrap Tire Facility:** The former GT Scrap Tire Facility is targeted for redevelopment as a public park. The site is situated in the village of Barryton on the banks of the Chippewa River, a blue-ribbon bass stream frequented by thousands of anglers every year. The County estimates the redevelopment of this site will leverage nearly \$3 million in private investment in the community (e.g. hotels, campgrounds, restaurants, sporting goods store) and create up to 50 jobs.
- **Hanchett Manufacturing:** The Hanchett Manufacturing site is targeted for redevelopment as a mixed-use residential and commercial complex. The site is situated on the northern edge of downtown Big Rapids, within walking distance of several shops and restaurants. The County estimates the redevelopment of this site will result in private investment of over \$12 million (e.g. new construction), and create affordable housing options for struggling residents. This project will generate at least 80 new jobs.



- **Former Standard Service Station:** The former Standard Service Station site is targeted for redevelopment as a public park. Creation of this public space is essential to revitalizing commercial and retail interest in the Village of Mecosta. The County estimates the new park will leverage approximately \$4 million in private investment (e.g. renovation of existing commercial spaces for restaurants and shops) and create nearly 20 jobs.
- **Former Gingrich Tire Center:** The former Gingrich Tire Center is targeted for redevelopment as park space, which will be incorporated into the existing Veteran's Park. The expansion of the park will result in increased pedestrian traffic in downtown Remus. The County estimates this redevelopment project will generate approximately \$2 million of private investment and create approximately 15 jobs.
- **Former Mecosta Landfill:** The former Mecosta Landfill is targeted for redevelopment as park space, which will be incorporated into the existing White Pine Trail Park. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources estimates approximately 20,000 people use the park annually. The redevelopment of this site will enable more visitors to access the amenities available in Rodney and nearby Big Rapids. The County estimates this project will generate nearly \$8 million in private investment (e.g. bike shops, trailside restaurants) and create nearly 40 jobs.
- **Former Red's Service Station:** The former Red's Service Station is targeted for redevelopment as a community center designed to provide residents of Stanwood with indoor and outdoor recreation opportunities. The County estimates the redevelopment of this site will leverage approximately \$5 million in private investment (e.g. construction of the building) and create approximately 30 jobs.

**ii) Greenspace.** The County's use of Assessment Grant funds will support redevelopment of four priority brownfields (former GT Scrap Tire Facility, former Standard Service Station, former Gingrich Tire Center, and former Mecosta Landfill) into parkland, which will result in the creation of approximately 102 acres of greenspace. Impoverished residents frequent the County's existing parks as an inexpensive family activity. This has prompted the County to prioritize the creation of easily accessible trail and park systems that offer a combination of family friendly opportunities (walking, urban gardens, picnicking areas, disc-golf courses, and bicycle paths). By redeveloping priority brownfields as greenspace, the County is achieving its Community Plan goals for improved public amenities.

**c. Environmental Benefits from Infrastructure Reuse/Sustainable Reuse.** The new Assessment Grants will support the County's Community Plan goals for sustainable land use and a more efficient transportation system. The County's use of Assessment Grant funds to support redevelopment of its priority brownfields will provide environmental benefits by minimizing the infrastructure investment associated with those projects. The Community Plan is designed to help protect natural resources and preserve greenspace in rural areas, while directing growth to urban centers where existing infrastructure is present. This approach also conserves energy and resources by avoiding the extension of new utilities, roads, etc. to undeveloped areas. Many brownfields in the County are abandoned or underutilized manufacturing and commercial/retail structures in the urban core, such as the Hanchett Manufacturing site. Each of these brownfields is served by infrastructure (e.g. roads, rail, utilities, etc.) sufficient to support redevelopment and reuse without significant additional resource investment. Many of the vacant commercial/retail buildings on these brownfields are structurally sound and only require remodeling and updating to be ready for productive reuse. When existing buildings must be removed, the County will strongly encourage deconstruction of buildings, rather than conventional demolition.

Many of the County's brownfields are located near areas designated for mass transit (e.g. bus service) and airport expansion projects. The Assessment Grants will assist the County in acquiring and redeveloping brownfields targeted for transit-oriented developments. The reuse of these sites will accommodate bus stops and convenience stands, as well as increase amenities (e.g. coffee shops, restaurants, clothing stores, gift shops) for airport travelers. An improved mass transit system will reduce fossil fuel use and emissions, and provide alternative commuting options for County residents.

# Mecosta County, Michigan

## Appendix 3 Special Considerations Checklist

Please identify (with an **X**) if any of the below items apply to your community or your project as described in your proposal. EPA will verify these disclosures prior to selection of the grant.

- ☐ Community population is 10,000 or less
- ☐ Federally recognized Indian tribe
- ☐ United States territory
- ☐ Applicant assisting a Tribe or territory
- ☐ Targeted brownfield sites are impacted by mine-scarred land
- ☐ Targeted brownfield sites are contaminated with controlled substances
- ☐ Community is impacted by recent natural disaster(s)
- ☒ Project is primarily focusing on Phase II assessments
- ☒ Community demonstrates firm leveraging commitments for facilitating brownfield project completion by identifying amounts and contributors of funding in the proposal and have included documentation
- ☒ Community experiencing plant closures (or other significant economic disruptions), including communities experiencing auto plant closures due to bankruptcy
- ☐ Applicant is a recipient of a HUD/DOT/EPA Partnership for Sustainable Communities grant

## **ATTACHMENT 1**

### **Threshold Documentation**



**FY2012 USEPA BROWNFIELDS HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES  
AND PETROLEUM ASSESSMENT GRANT PROPOSAL  
MECOSTA COUNTY, MICHIGAN**

**RESPONSES TO THRESHOLD CRITERIA**

1. Applicant Eligibility: Mecosta County is a general purpose unit of government.
2. Letter from State Environmental Authority: The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) provided Mecosta County with a letter of acknowledgment for this FY2012 Assessment Grant Proposal. The MDEQ letter is included as Attachment 2 in the Narrative Proposal.
3. Site Eligibility and Property Ownership Eligibility: Mecosta County is requesting a community-wide assessment grant; therefore, site eligibility and property ownership eligibility criteria are not applicable.

## **ATTACHMENT 2**

Letter from State Authority



RICK SNYDER  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY  
LANSING



DAN WYANT  
DIRECTOR

October 28, 2011

Mr. William Mrdeza  
Executive Director  
Mecosta County Development Corporation  
246 North State Street  
Big Rapids, Michigan 49307

Dear Mr. Mrdeza:

SUBJECT: Letter of Acknowledgement Regarding the United States Environmental Protection Agency Brownfield Assessment Grant Proposal

The purpose of this letter is to respond to Mecosta County's request for acknowledgement of a proposal to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for brownfield grants under Title II, Subtitle A, of the Small Business Liability Relief and Brownfields Revitalization Act of 2002 (the Brownfields Law). The Department of Environmental Quality, Remediation Division, is supportive of community-based redevelopment efforts and has reviewed the information you provided.

Mecosta County is applying for a \$200,000 hazardous substances assessment grant and a \$200,000 petroleum assessment grant which can be used to conduct assessment activities at eligible brownfield sites in the county. The applicant is considered eligible for this award as a general purpose unit of local government.

Should the EPA provide these brownfield grants to Mecosta County, it would allow the county to support brownfield redevelopment and reuse, and improve the community's economic development and environmental conditions. If you need further information or assistance, please contact Mr. Ron Smedley, Brownfield Coordinator, Remediation Division, at 517-373-4805, or you may contact me.

Sincerely,

Susan Erickson, Chief  
Brownfield Redevelopment Unit  
Program Support Section  
Remediation Division  
517-241-8707

cc: Ms. Deborah Orr, USEPA Region 5  
Mr. Ron Smedley, DEQ

### **ATTACHMENT 3**

Leveraged Funding/Resources Documentation



www.mecostaedc.com

246 N. State Street • Big Rapids, MI 49307 • phone: (231) 592-3403 • fax: (231) 592-4085 • email: wmrdeza@co.mecosta.mi.us

William R. Mrdeza, Executive Director

November 9, 2011

RECEIVED  
NOV 17 2011  
BY: .....

Mr. Paul E. Bullock  
County Administrator  
Mecosta County  
400 Elm Street  
Big Rapids, Michigan 49307

Re: Leveraged Resources from Mecosta County Development Corporation to support  
FY2012 U.S.EPA Brownfields Assessment Grants  
Mecosta County, Michigan

Dear Mr. Bullock:

The Mecosta County Development Corporation (MCDC) is providing this letter as documentation of our commitment to provide in-kind staff resources to support implementation of two FY2012 U.S. EPA Brownfields Assessment Grants (\$200,000 for Hazardous Substances and \$200,000 for Petroleum). Our Executive Director, Mr. William Mrdeza (the Assessment Grant Project Director), will provide up to 300 in-kind hours to support programmatic and community outreach functions associated with the Assessment Grant Project. These services include preparation of quarterly reports, progress meetings, financial tracking, preparation and distribution of Project information, hosting public meetings, and coordination with local municipalities, stakeholders, and U.S. EPA personnel. The value of these in-kind services is approximately \$9,900 (300 hours at an average hourly rate of \$33).

Very truly yours,

Jerome Schwind, President  
Mecosta County Development Corporation





# FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY

## COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY

October 31, 2011

Mr. Paul E. Bullock  
County Administrator  
Mecosta County  
400 Elm Street  
Big Rapids, Michigan 49307

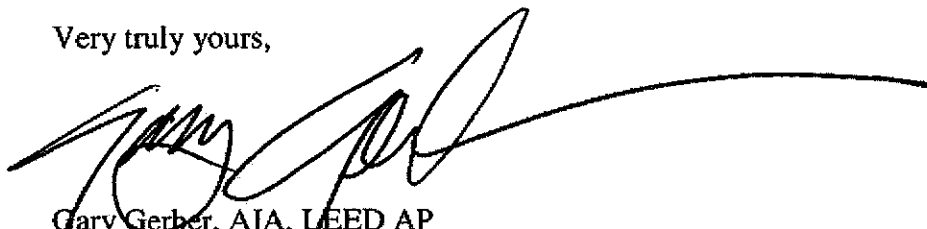
Re: Leveraged In-Kind Student and Faculty Services  
FY2012 U.S.EPA Brownfields Assessment Grants  
Mecosta County, Michigan

Dear Mr. Bullock:

Ferris State University (FSU) is pleased to support Mecosta County's (the County) application for two FY2012 U.S. EPA Brownfields Assessment Grants (\$200,000 for Hazardous Substances and \$200,000 for Petroleum). As a community member of Mecosta County, we recognize the importance of brownfield redevelopment in revitalizing our local economy. Students enrolled in our Facility Management Program have an opportunity to learn the principles of planning, design, and real estate development. We believe our students could benefit from participating in the community planning aspects of local brownfield redevelopment projects, specifically, the redevelopment design and planning process. In turn, the results of our students' findings could also benefit the community by providing a broad range of brownfield redevelopment scenarios for priority sites.

To support the County's Assessment Grant Project, FSU pledges up to 320 labor hours from our students (approximately 20 students at 16 hours each) to contribute to your brownfield redevelopment planning efforts. Thank you for the opportunity to participate in your project!

Very truly yours,



Gary Gerber, AIA, LEED AP  
Associate Professor, Ferris State University

October 31, 2011

Mr. Paul E. Bullock  
County Administrator  
Mecosta County  
400 Elm Street  
Big Rapids, Michigan 49307

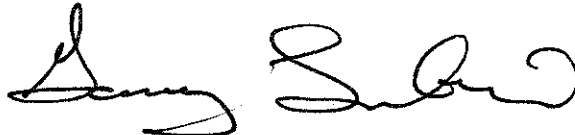
Re: Leveraged In-Kind Earthmoving Services  
FY2012 U.S.EPA Brownfields Assessment Grants  
Mecosta County, Michigan

Dear Mr. Bullock:

Lambrix Serve All is pleased to support Mecosta County's (the County) application for two FY2012 U.S. EPA Brownfields Assessment Grants (\$200,000 for Hazardous Substances and \$200,000 for Petroleum). Lambrix Serve All is a licensed contractor with decades of earthwork experience. As company president, I am providing this letter as documentation of our commitment to provide in-kind earthmoving services to support the County's Assessment Grant Project. Specifically, Lambrix Serve All will provide the County with earthmoving equipment (e.g., backhoe, bulldozer) and operators to clear sites and perform test pits, as needed, to support environmental assessment activities at brownfield sites. We pledge up to 50 hours of in-kind service for a total value of approximately \$4,000.

Lambrix Serve All looks forward to supporting the County's brownfield redevelopment program, which we recognize is a key component in revitalizing the local economy.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gary Lambrix". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "G" and a stylized "L".

Gary Lambrix, President  
Lambrix Serve All  
17111 Jefferson Road  
Morley, Michigan 49336

## **ATTACHMENT 4**

Letters of Support



**We Serve**

**BIG RAPIDS LIONS CLUB  
P. O. Box 807  
BIG RAPIDS, MICHIGAN 49307**

November 21, 2011

Mr. Paul E. Bullock  
County Administrator  
Mecosta County  
400 Elm Street  
Big Rapids, Michigan 49307

RE: Community Support for U.S. EPA Brownfields Assessment Grants  
Mecosta County, Michigan

Dear Mr. Bullock:

The Lions Club of Big Rapids (Lions Club) is pleased to provide this letter in support of your application for two FY2012 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) Brownfields Assessment Grants to assess and promote redevelopment of brownfield sites within Mecosta County. The global economic crisis has impacted our community in the last few years, with many local companies closing their doors and leaving behind vacant brownfield sites. We know Mecosta County made good progress utilizing its previous Assessment Grant funds to characterize several brownfield sites, many of which led to redevelopment and local job creation. However, more brownfield redevelopment is needed to continue boosting the local economy.

The role of the Lions Club in the new Assessment Grant Project will consist of coordinating with Mecosta County during community outreach activities. We will host public meetings and disseminate information on upcoming brownfield projects, and also solicit and process feedback from county residents regarding their knowledge of local brownfield sites of concern.

The Lions Club is excited to continue supporting Mecosta County as a community partner in the effort to promote local brownfield redevelopment projects and improve the quality of life for our residents.

Sincerely,

Jerry Nickles, President  
Lions Club of Big Rapids

November 8, 2011

Mr. Paul E. Bullock  
County Administrator  
Mecosta County  
400 Elm Street  
Big Rapids, Michigan 49307

RE: Community Support for U.S. EPA Brownfields Assessment Grants  
Mecosta County, Michigan

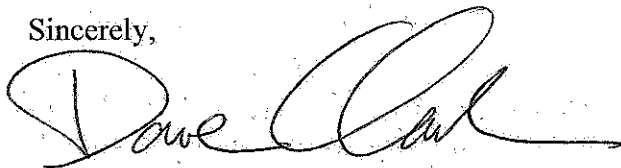
Dear Mr. Bullock:

The Mecosta County Area Chamber of Commerce (MCCOC) is pleased to support your application for two FY2012 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) Brownfields Assessment Grants to assess and promote redevelopment of brownfield sites within Mecosta County. We appreciate the opportunity to continue working with Mecosta County as a community partner.

As you know, the MCCOC is a community resource that assists and strengthens local businesses by providing advertising and networking opportunities, as well as hosting educational seminars. The MCCOC's role in the Assessment Grant Project will consist of coordinating with local governmental units, promoting inter-governmental collaboration, hosting community economic development forums, advertising the grant program, and helping entrepreneurs in accessing and utilizing the grant funds.

The MCCOC remains committed to improving regional economic conditions, and will continue to provide its resources to support Mecosta County's brownfield redevelopment efforts.

Sincerely,



Dave Clark, President  
Mecosta County Area Chamber of Commerce





**LARRY EMIG**  
Chairperson, Local Elected Officials  
**SHERI THOMPSON**  
Chairperson, Workforce Development Board  
**PAUL J. GRIFFITH**  
Executive Director

October 31, 2011

RECEIVED  
NOV 03 2011

BY: .....

Mr. Paul E. Bullock  
County Administrator  
Mecosta County  
400 Elm Street  
Big Rapids, Michigan 49307

RE: Community Support for U.S. EPA Brownfields Assessment Grants  
Mecosta County, Michigan

Dear Mr. Bullock:

Michigan Works! West Central (Michigan Works!) supports your application for two FY2012 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) Brownfields Assessment Grants to assess and promote redevelopment of brownfield sites within Mecosta County. As a longtime community partner with Mecosta County, we look forward to continuing our relationship with you during implementation of the new Grant Project.

Our mission is to produce a local, talented workforce with the required skills to attract, retain and expand businesses and enhance our regional economy. We understand the link between economic revitalization and brownfields redevelopment, and have demonstrated our commitment to this effort by moving our regional administrative office and our new Big Rapids Service Center into a former brownfield site that was assessed with Mecosta County's current EPA Assessment Grant funds.

The role of Michigan Works! in the new Assessment Grant Project will consist of coordinating with Mecosta County to determine if employment opportunities are available during brownfield redevelopment projects. We will review our databases to find out if qualified local workers are available to assist with jobs related to assessment, remediation, or construction activities at brownfield sites assessed during the Grant Project. If qualified candidates are available, we will work with Mecosta County to place these candidates into appropriate positions related to a particular project.

Michigan Works! remains committed to improving regional employment conditions, and will continue to provide its resources to support Mecosta County's brownfield redevelopment efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul J. Griffith". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first and last names being more prominent.

Paul Griffith, Executive Director  
Michigan Works! West Central

Our Mission: "To continually improve a Workforce Development System that produces a workforce with the required skills to attract, retain and expand business and enhance our regional economy."

Programs Funded by the MI Dept. of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth/Equal Opportunity Employers/Programs  
MI Relay Center • 800 649.3777 (Voice and TTY)

Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

www.michworks.org

231.796.4891 • Fax: 231.796.8316

Big Rapids, Michigan 49307

14330 Northland Drive



## MUSKEGON RIVER WATERSHED ASSEMBLY (MRWA)

@ Ferris State University  
1009 Campus Drive, JOH 200  
Big Rapids, MI 49307-2280  
Phone: (231) 591-2324 Fax: (231) 591-2306  
E-mail: [mrwa@ferris.edu](mailto:mrwa@ferris.edu) Website: [www.mrwa.org](http://www.mrwa.org)

October 31, 2011

Mr. Paul E. Bullock, County Administrator  
Mecosta County  
400 Elm Street  
Big Rapids, Michigan 49307

RE: Community Support from the Muskegon River Watershed Assembly  
U.S. EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant Project  
Mecosta County, Michigan

Dear Mr. Bullock:

The Muskegon River Watershed Assembly (MRWA) is pleased to be a community partner with Mecosta County, for the purpose of assisting with the implementation of your FY2012 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Brownfields Assessment Grants. The mission of the MRWA is to preserve, protect, restore, and promote the sustainable use of the Muskegon River, the land it drains, and the life it supports, through educational, scientific and conservation initiatives. The MRWA conducts grass-roots community outreach to promote awareness and engage citizens in river protection efforts. We also are engaged in restoration, cleanup, and habitat improvement projects associated with the Muskegon River and its tributaries. We support Mecosta County's efforts to stimulate redevelopment of brownfield sites through the use of its Assessment Grants, which should ultimately reduce their negative impacts (e.g. uncontrolled runoff, contaminant migration) to the watershed.

The MRWA's role in the Assessment Grant Project will be to assist Mecosta County with its community goal of protecting and preserving its water resources. The MRWA will attend project meetings as needed, and provide input on potential impacts to the Muskegon River watershed resulting from existing brownfields. During the environmental assessment, cleanup, and redevelopment process, we will provide the Project team with stream quality data and other information related to water quality, and provide guidance to minimize impacts to streams during redevelopment activities (e.g. earthwork during construction). Data obtained from groundwater sampling during assessment activities may also support our efforts to better understand and improve water quality. As appropriate, we will coordinate our stream restoration and cleanup efforts with the brownfield site redevelopment process to maximize the environmental benefit to the community.

The MRWA looks forward to assisting the County with its Assessment Grant Project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Gary A. Noble".

Gary A. Noble  
Executive Director